



U.S. Immigration  
and Customs  
Enforcement

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# News Release

## **ICE FUGITIVE OPERATION NETS MS-13 GANG MEMBER WANTED FOR MURDER IN EL SALVADOR**

MIDLAND PARK, N.J. -- A man wanted by authorities in El Salvador for a murder in his home country is behind bars today following an early morning arrest by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement's (ICE) Newark Fugitive Operations Team.

Newark Detention and Removal Officers arrested 25-year-old Rene Hugo Mejia Juarez in a pre-dawn operation. Mejia was located in an upscale neighborhood following a brief, but intensive investigation and surveillance.

When ICE officers knocked on the door of the house Mejia was living in, he attempted to flee through a side entrance, but was apprehended by officers posted on the perimeter. ICE officers arrested three other illegal aliens at the same residence during the operation. Members of the Midland Park Police Department and the United States Marshals Service assisted in the operation.

Mejia is the subject of an Interpol warrant for a murder committed in El Salvador. Field Office Director Raymond Simonse said, "Mejia is a dangerous individual and thanks to the efforts of the Fugitive Operations Team, the Midland Park Police Department and the United States Marshals Service he is no longer on the streets of New Jersey."

Salvadoran police allege that Mejia and an accomplice murdered a man on the banks of the Guisocoyolapa River in Canton El Sauce, El Salvador. Salvadoran police say that Mejia was the triggerman in the July 10, 2001 murder. They have been looking for Mejia and his accomplice since the murder.

ICE officers believe Mejia is a member of Mara Salvatrucha street gang, commonly known as MS-13, based on evidence uncovered after he was arrested. Mejia has been charged with entering the United States illegally. He will be detained without bond pending a hearing in immigration court.

The three other individuals encountered during the operation entered the U.S. without inspection and will be served notices to appear in immigration court. They will be detained pending their court appearance. Two of the individuals are from El Salvador and one is from Costa Rica.

Mejia's arrest was part of the National Fugitive Operations Program. During FY 2005 more than 890 fugitives were apprehended in New Jersey. Last year, ICE Fugitive Operations teams apprehended over 15,000 fugitives around the country.

Nationally, ICE has apprehended more than 1,800 foreign gang members as part of Operation Community Shield, an initiative to locate, arrest and deport gang members illegally living in the United States. More than 800 of those arrests involve MS-13 members and associates.

**# ICE #**

*U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement was established in March 2003 as the largest investigative arm of the Department of Homeland Security. ICE is comprised of four integrated divisions that form a 21st century law enforcement agency with broad responsibilities for a number of key homeland security priorities.*